

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The Office of the Press

Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this letter. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message on the 90th Anniversary of the National Park Service *August 24, 2006*

I send greetings to those celebrating the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service.

Americans take great pride in our country's natural and historic treasures, and the National Park Service plays an important role in ensuring that our rich heritage is preserved and enjoyed for generations to come. Since its establishment in 1916, the National Park Service has grown to include almost 400 sites, with parks in nearly every state. These parks protect beautiful landscapes, tell important stories about our country's past, and encourage our citizens to conserve our natural environment and celebrate our national history.

Over the past five years, the National Park Service has made significant progress in conserving our natural resources and improving the condition of park facilities. I call on all Americans to help in these ef-

forts and to enhance our parks as we get ready for the National Park Service's centennial celebration. Through continued cooperation and partnership, our national parks can endure for the next 100 years and beyond.

I appreciate the volunteers and employees of the National Park Service who dedicate their time and talents to maintaining and enhancing our national parks. Your efforts help advance environmental stewardship, promote outdoor recreation, and preserve our national memory.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on the Future of America's National Parks *August 24, 2006*

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior

Subject: The Future of America's National Parks

In honoring its 90th anniversary, I have called on the National Park Service, and every American, to continue the cooperation necessary for our vibrant national parks

to endure for the next 100 years and beyond.

Over the past 5 years, the National Park Service has built a strong foundation for the future, with 6,000 park improvements completed or underway. We should further enhance our national parks during the decade leading up to the 2016 centennial celebration.

Therefore, I direct you to establish specific performance goals for our national parks that, when achieved, will help prepare them for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment. These goals should integrate the assessments of the past 5 years used in monitoring natural resources and improving the condition of park facilities. You are to identify signature projects and programs that are consistent with these goals and that continue the National Park Service legacy of leveraging philanthropic, partnership, and government investments for the benefit of national parks and their visitors.

You are directed to consult with the Director of the Office of Management and

Budget and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality as appropriate in implementing this memorandum. I encourage you to invite and receive suggestions from those who desire to preserve the scenic, cultural, historical, geological, and recreational values of our national parks.

You are to report the results of the implementation of this memorandum to me by May 31, 2007.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Radio Address

August 26, 2006

Good morning. Earlier this week, I had coffee with Rocky Vaccarella in the White House. Rocky is from St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana, and he and his family lost everything they owned to Hurricane Katrina. Rocky drove to Washington to thank the Federal Government for its efforts to help people like him, and he brought a trailer along to help remind us that many good people along our gulf coast are still living in difficult conditions and that the hard work of rebuilding has only just begun.

This Tuesday marks the first anniversary of Katrina, one of the deadliest and most costly natural disasters in American history. In Mississippi, the storm wiped out virtually everything along an 80-mile stretch of the coast, flattening homes and destroying entire communities. In Louisiana, flooding left 80 percent of the city of New Orleans underwater. The human costs were even more terrible. More than a thousand people died, countless families lost their homes and livelihoods, and tens of thousands of men,

women, and children were forced to flee the region and leave behind everything they knew.

During the storm and in the days that followed, Americans responded with heroism and compassion. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued people stranded in flooded neighborhoods and brought them to high ground. Doctors and nurses stayed behind to care for their patients, and some even went without food so their patients could eat. Many of the first-responders risking their lives to help others were victims themselves, wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. And across our great land, the armies of compassion rallied to bring food and water and hope to fellow citizens who had lost everything. In these and countless other selfless acts, we saw the spirit of America at its best.

Unfortunately, Katrina also revealed that Federal, State, and local governments were